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THE NEW YORK
LATIN LEAFLET

Entered at the Post Office in Brooklyn as second-class matter, October 29, 1900

25 Issues
Every Penny of
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VOL III

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK MARH 16, 1903

No 68

TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ARTHUR S SOMERS, Ex-Commissioner of Education
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**Several Papers on the Type of the Greek
Epitaphios with Special Reference
to the Oration in Thucydides**

FIRST PAPER

INTRODUCTION

This study is an outgrowth of a more special investigation into the genuineness of the Epitaphios of Lysias, a much disputed subject, but none the less interesting because it has received more or less attention throughout the history of classical study. There is a feeling now-a-days that it is bad classical form to treat a subject which has once been treated. Indeed, this feeling has been so alive as to induce a search for the "new and novel", which has at times been followed by results either heterodox or quite wide of the mark. At any rate, keenly conscious of this classical cant, I have felt the necessity of creating an excuse for daring to study again a subject so much studied, and in my *Index Lysiacus* (Bonn 1895) I have endeavored to furnish such an excuse in the means which it affords of more accurately deciding some internal questions as to whether or not Lysias wrote the speech which bears his name. One of the outgrowths of this study is the present paper, and, like most outgrowths, it is lacking somewhat in unity of purpose. This is especially visible in the partial stylistic comparison based on participle and finite verb, a comparison which was not carried out further by reason of the limitations of space as well as of inclination. So, while so far as I know

there is no study which exactly covers the same ground with this, yet it is nothing more than a compilation of facts. It may be found not wholly lacking in originality of treatment, but I have not hesitated to steal, right and left, wherever I could find anything that suited my purpose. The literature bearing on the subject is too extensive to admit of enumeration here.

I shall, therefore, first consider the different representatives of the Epitaphios historically, its significance and its type. I shall next consider the oration given in Thucydides in particular. Finally, I shall endeavor to draw a conclusion as to the relation which this oration sustains to the history of Thucydides and to the oration actually delivered by Pericles.

THE PUBLIC FUNERAL

The manner in which the Greeks conducted a public funeral is described by Thucydides (2 35): "The relics of the dead were exposed in a tent, erected for the purpose, for three days, during which the relatives might bring funeral offerings. When the time came for burial, the wagons of each tribe bore coffins of cypress wood in which the bones of its slain were deposited, and one bier covered with a pall was carried in commemoration of the missing. Any one, citizen or alien, might join the procession, and women who were related to the dead were present to lament them. The remains were placed in a public tomb in the most beautiful suburb of the city—the Ceramicus—and an orator expressly chosen by the senate, pronounced the funeral speech." From the epitaphioi of Lysias, Plato and Demosthenes, we learn that sacrifices were offered and games celebrated in honor of the event.

THE FUNERAL ORATIONS

If Demosthenes is to be believed, the Athenians were the only people who honored with funeral orations those who fell in the service of their country (Lept. p 499).

Although this is not true to the letter, yet the delivery of such orations was *customary* only at Athens, while elsewhere it was *occasional*, and doubtless in imitation of the Attic example. The origin of their institution is very ancient and consequently very uncertain. The Scholiast on Thuc. 2 35, understands Pericles to ascribe the institution to Solon, upon whom the later Greeks were accustomed to father almost any law or usage which could not otherwise be accounted for. (Dionys. Halic. Ant. Rom. 5 17; Diog. Laert. Sol. 1 2 8.) Thirwall and Grote believe that they had their origin in the Persian wars. (Thw. Hist. Gr. vol 3 p 54; Grote Hist. Gr. vol 6 p 41. See also Diod. Sic. 11 33, who says expressly: "then for the first time"; and Dionys. Halic. Ant. Rom. 5 17.) It is not improbable that both views are correct; they clearly do not necessarily conflict. They could not have been instituted much later at any rate, since we have an actual example of one within forty years afterwards, and since about nine years later still, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war (B C 431), the practice was so firmly established that a regular course of ceremonies was prescribed for the occasion.

The specimens of this kind of composition during the classical period, of which any mention has come down to us, are as follows:

1 The earliest is the oration of Pericles in honor of the citizens who fell before Samos in a war which was concluded 440 B C Steimbrotus quoted by Plutarch in his life of Pericles (p 156 D) has preserved a fine sentiment from this speech, which is alluded to by Aristotle (Rhet. 1 7 34) as the work of Pericles, where he compares the loss of the slain to the abstraction of the spring from the year. (I differ from Roscher and agree with Weber here as to Aristotle's quotation being

from the Samian oration. See also Grote Hist. Gr. vol 6 p 41.)

2 The second in order is the speech which is the especial subject of our study, reported by Thucydides in the second book of his history.

3 The next in order, though of uncertain date, is the oration composed by Gorgias the Sicilian. The type of the epitaphios was not set until the time of Gorgias, who unfortunately was the first to give the stamp to this style of composition. It appears from Philostratus who considered it a specimen of *ὑπερβάλλουσα σοφία*, that it was delivered at Athens over those who fell in the Persian wars. It was about this time, not earlier than 427 B C, that Gorgias, then advanced in years, first came to Athens. The stilted and unnatural style of this sophist exerted but too powerful an influence at Athens, and formed the model for subsequent epitaphioi.

D H H

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